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A STUDY OF HOME VISITATION AS A DUTY OF THE CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHER

A Thesis

Presented to

the Department of Christian Education

Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Religious Education

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Throughout the history of the church, visitation has been a vital part of pastoral service. Public school educators have realized that knowledge of the home background of a pupil can aid in extending the effectiveness of the educational experience. Since religious education is concerned both with a personal Christian experience and the impartation of knowledge to enable development into a mature, effective Christian life, religious educators can utilize home visitation to great advantage.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to inquire into the history of visitation in secular education and to note the sociological and psychological forces which have necessitated visitation as a vital aspect in educational procedure; (2) to trace the development of visitation in the church from its institution by Christ to the present day emphasis upon visitation evangelism, noting the method advocated; and (3) to consider the necessity of home visitation by the church school teacher.

Importance of the study. The church school teacher has not been sufficiently aware of the possibilities that lie in home visitation as a means of increasing the value of her service. Religious educators have lagged in applying facts made known by psychologists, sociologists and educators. In this study an attempt was made to show that home visitation is a vital duty of the church school teacher.

Procedure of research. Using the resources available, no publications dealing solely with the subject matter of the thesis were discovered. Books and periodicals in the fields of secular education, sociology, practical theology, and religious education furnished the basic material for the study. The general board of evangelism of the Methodist Church complied with a request for pamphlets on visitation evangelism. The writer chose to solicit materials from this particular denomination because of the wide acclaim of their Philadelphia Campaign. A class lecture by W. C. Mavis in Pastoral Psychology also provided material that was pertinent.

CHAPTER II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF VISITATION IN SECULAR EDUCATION

There are three main forces--historical, philosophical, and psychological--which have brought about the present day emphasis on home visitation in secular education. The trend of the history of our country will be noted as culminating in the vast social changes brought about by industrialism. These social changes prompted educators to formulate a new philosophy of education. A vacuum had developed between the school and home, and education was fast losing its usefulness. Education was far removed from life. To remedy this situation, educators began to center interest upon the individual and his needs. Psychologists pointed out that to understand the individual and his needs, one must probe into his home background. Home visitation thus became a vital implement in successful teaching.

I. AMERICAN HISTORICAL FORCES AND RESULTANT SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The colonial days. The earliest visiting teacher perhaps did not realize the importance of his contacts with the homes of his pupils. Due to economic necessity, it was their homes which furnished his dwelling places. This

"boarding around" enabled the teacher to become intimately associated with each family. He observed the trends of community life at close range and was a participant in its activities. Through this close association between parent and teacher, parents were well acquainted with the program of school life and lent their support to it. Even the Latin grammar school of this period, which was on the secondary education level, ministered to the desires and needs of those preparing for the professions.[1]

This close relationship in the colonial period between school and home provided for a unification of the social forces which acted upon the lives of individuals. In supplying the instrumentalities of learning which general living failed to provide in an adequate manner, schools were an admirable supplement to life.[2]

The westward movement. As the population swept westward across the Appalachian Mountains and new communities were formed, schools sprang out of the life of these communities. These schools were dependent on each local situation for their control and support. A building was erected by

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[1] Charles E. Skinner and R. Emerson Langfitt, editors, An Introduction To Modern Education (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1937), p. 81.

[2] William H. Kilpatrick, editor, The Educational Frontier (New York: The Century Company, 1933), p. 35.

volunteer labor, and a local school tax was levied. Teachers were chosen who were sensitive to the needs of the community and who possessed general ability. Professional knowledge of educational principles was not an achievement of the teacher, and school trustees were usually as well informed about education as was the teacher. These trustees took an active part in directing the teaching process. Such close supervision indicates the interrelation between school and community life as all struggled to build a new society in the wilderness.[3]

The rise of an industrial civilization. The coming of machines and cities destroyed the unity of a community by the diversity of interests and occupations that arose. The self-sustained patriarchal family was no longer existent and a spirit of independence prevailed in families. Fostering this spirit was a decline of domesticity as mothers sought employment outside the home and children were turned over to the care of others. This change in social organization is illustrated by the method of taking the census in 1790, where the name of the head of the family was reported, as contrasted with the method used in 1850, where the family

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3 Skinner and Langfitt, op. cit., pp. 81-2.

was displaced by the individual.[4]

This industrial and financial transformation not only affected every phase of social life, but it introduced influential forces that were antagonistic to the ideals upheld in educational philosophy.[5]

Improved transportation and communication further weakened the relationships between school and community. Interests began to center on remote people and items.

The complex life that had emerged from a simple agrarian culture brought changes in the educational needs that the school seemed reluctant to meet. This reluctance was due to the change in the attitude of the teaching staff itself. Education had taken on a more definite form and had become standardized. Teachers had become specialists with professional training, and trustees were no longer capable supervisors. Professionally trained supervisors were employed who had no knowledge of the community and its needs. These forces arising within a maturing industrial nation tended to separate the school and the community it served.[6]

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[4] George S. Counts, and others, The Social Foundations of Education (Report of the Commission on the Social Studies, Part IX. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), pp. 79-91.

[5] Kilpatrick, op. cit., p. 35.

[6] Skinner and Langfitt, op. cit., p. 82.

The twentieth century. The main concern of educators of this century has been to bridge the gap in school-community relations caused by urbanization and industrialization. Efforts have been made to adapt the curriculum to meet the demands of our complex civilization and to inaugurate programs which will draw the home and school together.

The first type of program launched to meet these needs was prompted by the larger enrollments. A curriculum had to be devised to meet a wide variety of pupil needs. Greater financial support was necessary and the school endeavored to make the public cognizant of its importance. Extracurricular activities were organized to lure pupils into school and to interest the community in the school. Athletics, dramatics and musical programs came to serve the ends of school publicity. This movement came to the height of its influence in the period following World War I.[7]

The weakness of these publicity drives became apparent during the depression, according to Skinner and Langfitt:

> They usually failed to realize that the public school system was an outgrowth of community life itself, not something to be "sold" to it, and that school-community relations are of a very fundamental nature. When the nation was facing a period of retrenchment in all lines, pressure on the schools became great. The communities began to retrench first

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[7] Ibid., p. 83.

> in those lines where something had been "sold" to them, and retained longest those services for which they themselves had struggled, and to which they had contributed. This situation had an important influence on education in developing a more fundamental concept of school-community relations.[8]

The present trend in meaningful school-community relations is seen to depend upon the teacher's visit to the home of the pupil. As stated by Juckett, "Provided there is a proper attitude on the part of the faculty, one of the most important items in the maintenance of good home-school relationships is the home visit."[9] A visit that indicates a proper attitude on the part of the teacher is a visit where there is a purpose, where a genuine interest is shown in the child, where the good points of a child are talked about before any problems are brought up, where the teacher places herself on the level of the family (not an educated snooper), and where parents and children both expect the call. The practice of visiting only when the child is in some difficulty should be avoided.[10] The teacher should also acquaint the parents with the aims and modern techniques in education. Parents only know the educational system as it was in their day and are often confused by present day school issues.

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[8] Loc. cit.

[9] Edwin A. Juckett, "Meaningful Relationships Between Home and School," The School Review, 52:93, February, 1944.

[10] Loc. cit.

Spearce in his article in The Encyclopedia Americana dealing with national systems of education states, "Particularly in the United States, in recent years, has there been much experimentation and adjustment of schools to meet the demands of our swiftly moving life."[11] The changes produced in the educational relationships in our country by the shifting scenes of history have been noted with the key of adjustment found in home visitation.

II. CHILD-CENTERED EDUCATION--AN IMPETUS TO VISITATION

The pupil--an individual. In This New Education, written by Herman Horne in 1931, the author states:

> All the new contemporary educational tendencies are paido-centric, that is, child-centered. A little child is leading the education and teachers of our day. His nature and needs are foremost in the new theory and practice.[12]

Regard for the uniqueness and worth of the individual personality is one of the basic features of the democratic philosophy of life. Hence, recognition of individuality in the halls of learning is considered vital in the development of the type of leadership that is essential to carry on a

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[11] M. Edmund Spearce, "National Systems of Education," The Encyclopedia Americana, 1944 edition, IX, p. 637.

[12] Herman Harrell Horne, This New Education (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1931), p. 58.

democracy.[13]

The former method of dealing with pupils as one of a group or class was found to be inferior for:

> The individual's reactions, his particular hopes and fears, his entire mental and emotional life, are being understood today as never before. They are being viewed in their infinite complexity and variety. All these complexities must be taken into account. So long as individuals are dealt with in groups, according to false standards of uniformity, their chance for fullest development is inevitably blocked.[14]

The pupil--a member of society. While educators encourage individuality, they also stress the creation of a broad social consciousness. Social growth is deemed more important than grades, and the mutual sharing of interests is conceived as being of greater value than individual efforts and attainment. While education deals with a child as an individual, it does not foster the attitude in the child that he is an isolated individual, but rather that he is a member of society. Individualization and socialization are seen in education today as complimentary and not antithetical processes.[15]

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[13] Horne, loc. cit.

[14] Jane F. Culbert, The Visiting Teacher At Work (New York: The Commonwealth Fund Division of Publications, 1930), p. xi.

[15] Charles E. Skinner and R. Emerson Langfitt, editors, An Introduction To Modern Education (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1937), p. 81.

The social aspects in education are expressed in a concise manner by Skinner and Langfitt:

> Education is both a social process and a social function. It is dynamic, changing to meet the major needs of a changing society, and also transmissive conserving the established values of past social experience.[16]

The pupil--a product of his environment. Freeman in an article on the psychology of education in The Encyclopedia Americana defines the education of an individual as, " . . . the product of the sum of the external influences which are brought to bear upon him, and of the reactions which he makes to these influences."[17] With the realization that a child is learning all his waking hours and noting that the high school graduate has spent less than a sixth of his waking hours in school since he entered the first grade,[18] educators began to see the importance of understanding the community and home of the pupil.

The teacher who could successfully unify the child's school experiences with the experiences he had carried with him into the classroom was the teacher who was well acquain-

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[16] Ibid., p. iii.

[17] Frank N. Freeman, "Psychology of Education," The Encyclopedia Americana, 1944 Edition, IX, p. 640.

[18] J. Paul Williams, The New Education and Religion (New York: Association Press, 1945), p. 97.

ted with the home of the child. The home life of the child was the basic factor in his education. Jersild pointed out the reason for this:

> The child's first teachers are his parents. What he learns from them through what they do, the care they provide, the instruction they supply, the example they set, is likely to have a greater influence on him than any other educational agency with which he comes in contact as he grows older. By the time he reaches . . . school age, he is already a highly educated individual. Habits, skills, attitudes, modes of behavior which go into the making of what we call his temperament, character and personality have been established.[19]

The family plays such a significant role in the molding of a child's life because here is a continuity of life that is impossible in any other environment. Here the social processes are in continuous interplay--from opposition to cooperation and social control.[20]

III. THE "VISITING TEACHER"

The visiting teacher cannot take the place of the classroom teacher in home visitation. However, this type of program has served to furnish reliable data which indicates the importance, methods and results of home visitation.

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[19] Arthur T. Jersild, and others, Child Development and The Curriculum (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teacher's College, Columbia University, 1946), p. 5.

[20] Francis J. Brown, Educational Sociology (New York Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1947), p. 191.

Development of this service. The "visiting teacher" service was experimentally developed in 1906 in New York, Boston, and Hartford.

In 1921 the Commonwealth Fund of New York sponsored a country-wide demonstration. They placed a visiting teacher in each of thirty different cities, counties and rural communities. The Commonwealth Fund provided for two-thirds of the teacher's salary while local boards of education paid the remaining one-third. The success of this demonstration was illustrated by the fact that almost all of these local boards involved, voted to assume the entire financial responsibility of the visiting teacher if she would remain on their staff.[21]

In 1925 a report was made on the visiting teacher service in the schools of Rochester, New York. Here all visiting teachers were amenable to a director who employed, trained, and supervised the field staff. Staff conferences were held once a week. Case records were read and methods of treatment for specific cases were discussed. The use and extension of school and community facilities was commented upon. Recent publications were reviewed and informal talks

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[21] Blake Clark, "The Teacher Goes A-Visiting," The Reader's Digest, 50:43, June, 1947.

were made.[22]

In 1947 there were 1500 trained visiting teachers serving in 266 cities and the rural areas of 40 states.[23]

Qualifications. Since the roots of the service of the visiting teacher lie in both education and social work, the visiting teacher must be one who has supplemented classroom experience with a special study of child psychology, social work methods, and community resources.

Role in school life. In every school there are children who are failing to reap the full benefits from their educational experience because of undesirable personality traits or because of unfavorable conditions in their home life. In 1944 it was estimated that there were approximately a million maladjusted children in American schools with twenty-nine million other school children who could be helped by closer cooperation between the school and home.[24]

It was the concern of the visiting teacher to restore to normal school life those children whose opportunity for

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[22] Mabel Brown Ellis, The Visiting Teacher in Rochester (New York: Joint Committee on Methods of Preventing Delinquency, 1925), p. 59.

[23] Clark, op. cit., p. 41.

[24] Juckett, op. cit., p. 97.

further education seemed hopeless, and to bring about friendly relationships between school and home. In many instances the visiting teacher has displaced the traditional truant officer.

Method. The teacher made the acquaintance of the child in a casual, cordial way. Care was taken not to focus attention on the child's difficulty. The teacher had opportunity to study the child in the school environment--the playground, the gymnasism, the library, the laboratory, the classroom--where many of the aspects of his personality were brought out.[25]

After studying the child, noting his interests, gifts, aptitudes, desires, and failings, the teacher turned to the school, the home and the community:

> In her study of the child in difficulty, the visiting teacher asks of the school, "How can the school process best fit the needs of this child?"
>
> She asks of the home, "What in the family or home environment is preventing this child from realizing his potential powers and expressing his best self in his civic relationships?"
>
> She asks of the community, "What lacks or obstacles for which the community is responsible are preventing this child from receiving his just share of opportun-

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[25] Jane F. Culbert, The Visiting Teacher At Work, pp. 12-14.

ity for physical, mental and spiritual growth?"[26]

In the work of the visiting teacher every difficulty of the school child was noted to have as its basis a need of adjustment between the individual and his world. Any real accomplishment depended on the teacher's ability to assist the child in this adjustment, or to build up the child's environment so that it would be more favorable to his adjustment.[27] The teacher met this problem by enlarging the child's experience, improving parental attitudes, and seeking to change detrimental community influences.

The visiting teacher endeavored to supply the child with elements lacking in his own environment such as friendship, security, encouragement, opportunity for successful accomplishment, and a chance to express himself in some creative work or wholesome recreation. These influences often helped to change the frequent inferiority attitude of the child.[28]

The importance of the home has been noted[29] in the habits, attitudes and modes of behavior of a child, so it was here that the visiting teacher most frequently found

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[26] Ibid., p. 3.

[27] Ibid., p. 5.

[28] Ibid., pp. 21-2.

[29] Supra., p. 11-2.

the handicap to the child's development. In some instances parents were indifferent or even suspicious in their attitude toward the school. This was often the case where the parents were foreign born and had not adjusted their standards and customs to those of American living. Children were handicapped when parents manifested no interest in their achievements in school life. The visiting teacher acquainted the parents with aspects of school life and, after winning the cooperation and friendship of the parent in their mutual endeavor to help the child, sought to better situations inherent in the home.

The visiting teacher facilitated her work by taking time to become acquainted with the personality of the community. Some communities were built on sure foundations, some were mushroom growths, some had no civic pride, and others were progressive. There was a deep psychological difference in each type of community which had a subtle influence on the child. Often a map was made of the community noting such things as recreation centers, freight yards or docks, vacant lots, pool halls, motion picture houses, stands that sold detrimental literature, and churches.[30]

Case studies indicating results. Clark, Ellis and

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[30] Culbert, op. cit., p. 64.

Culbert cite cases that indicate the beneficial results of visitation:

> Had the classroom teacher, for instance, known Johnny Jackson's parents, she would have understood his sullen disposition and stubborn refusal to work. When Mrs. Thrade, the visiting teacher, called on Johnny's family, she found a partially paralyzed father, brooding in his invalid's chair. He took out his frustration on Johnny, snapping at him and ordering him about until the boy had rebelled against all authority.
>
> Among the various community agencies, Mrs. Thrade found one which agreed to teach the invalid father to japan trays and cut jigsaw puzzles. His self-respect increased as he added to the family income, and he became less irritable. He depended upon Johnny to get pictures for his puzzles, and after a while the two began to work together as a team. The father praised Johnny for his dependability, and for the first time permitted him to join the local scout troop.
>
> When the classroom teacher learned of Johnny's difficulties, she went out of her way to help him. Gradually the sullen, rebellious expression left his face. When finally he took home a report card showing that he had made the highest grades in his class that month, it was a triumph for four people.[31]

Case II:

> Elsie, who was an attractive and well-behaved little girl, came to school late almost every morning and no efforts by the classroom teacher made any permanent impression upon her record. It was impossible to get any excuses from her mother, or to find out from the child why they were not forthcoming. Indeed she became so emotionally upset when pressed for the reason, that the classroom teacher began to suspect something seriously wrong in the home.
>
> An evening call by the visiting teacher revealed the fact the Elsie's mother was unable to read or

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31 Blake Clark, "The Teacher Goes A-Visiting," The Reader's Digest, 50:43-44, June, 1947.

write. She had been taken out of school when a young child to help support her mother, and had never been able to resume her education. Shortly after her marriage she had been compelled to leave her husband because of his cruel treatment of her and the baby. Now his whereabouts was unknown and she was supporting herself and Elsie. The hours of the factory where she was employed made it necessary for her to leave home at seven-thirty and she did not return till after six.

She had been under the impression that school began at 9 o'clock instead of eight-thirty and could not understand why the child was late. She had told Elsie to explain that her mother could neither read nor write but the little girl was ashamed to do so.

After the home visit the child came to school on time and was induced to spend her time after school in supervised recreation at a local community house instead of playing on the streets until her mother returned from work. The visiting teacher told Elsie that she ought to be very proud of a mother who was working so hard for her. She explained how when the mother was a little girl not much older than Elsie, she had been obliged to go to work herself and support her mother and that was why she never had learned to read or write. The suggestion was made that perhaps Elsie could help now by teaching her mother a little each day and later another teacher could be found.

A note from the visiting teacher in June, 1923, says that Elsie is now the brightest and one of the happiest girls in the graduating class. She is going on to junior high school where she will take a commercial course. The junior employment bureau has promised to find her a position for the summer and Elsie will soon be able in turn to help the mother who has sacrificed so much for her.[32]

Case III:

Problem as stated. Child failing in school work.

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32 Mabel Brown Ellis, The Visiting Teacher in Rochester, p. 112-3.

General attitude toward school one of discouragement and hopelessness. No cooperation from family.

Underlying difficulty. Child naturally slow in his work. Mother antagonistic toward school because of lack of understanding of rule that parents may not help children with home work.

Measures found effective. Explanation made to mother as to reasons for the rule. Advised ways in which she could assist school work without interfering with school's methods. Explained value of supplementary reading and suggested she get books from library to help child with his reading. Advised ways in which through play and home responsibilities she could build up his self-confidence and independence. Secured mother's visit to class to observe children's work. Arranged for opportunities in school for more active participation in games and activities in which child could join successfully.[33]

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[33] Jane F. Culbert, The Visiting Teacher At Work, p. 55.

CHAPTER III

CHURCH VISITATION FROM THE DAYS OF CHRIST TO THE PRESENT

The line of descent for religious education includes not only secular education, but also the church. Visitation will be traced from the days of Christ through the history of the church, noting the radical influence of the church of Rome. The present day upsurge of interest in house-to-house visitation with its resultant programs will be considered, with particular emphasis given to the development within the Methodist church.

I. VISITATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The example of Christ. Jesus won His first converts after an eight hour conversation. He not only won them, but He so inspired them with zeal that they in turn won others. By means of personal evangelism, Andrew brought Peter to Christ, John witnessed to James, and Philip carried the message to Nathanael.[1] It was by means of this person-to-person approach that Christ won each of his twelve disciples. They were carefully handpicked.[2]

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[1] J. Clark Hensley, The Pastor As Educational Director (Kansas City, Kansas: Central Seminary Press, 1946), p. 124.

[2] n. n., The Indiana Area, Lenten Advance in Evangelism (Nashville: Tidings, n. d.), pamphlet.

In His ministry Christ was never too busy to visit with people in order to interest them in the kingdom of God. The gospel of John records fourteen personal interviews conducted by Christ for this purpose.[3] Jesus did not talk about God only in the synagogue or in the temple. He took His good tidings to where common people lived their lives. As expressed by Powell:

> His most characteristic setting was neither the conventicle nor the altar, but the hearth and the mart, where the projects of man are carried on and where all the toil and sorrow, rejoicing and loving, marrying, childbearing, and heartbreak over the loss of loved ones are mingled in the crucible of life.[4]

Christ did not restrict his ministry to any class or type of people. With His life and lips He contacted all who were receptive:

> Among the persons Jesus visited, and with whom he dealt personally, were busy Andrew, skeptical Nathanael, a scholarly truth-seeker like Nicodemus, a fallen woman at the Pharisee's home, the sick nobleman's son, blind Bartimaeus, the crazy Gadarene, the paralyzed man at Capernaum, curious Zaccheus, the seeking Greeks, the foreigner--such as the Samaritan, the outcasts--as were the lepers, the rich young ruler, the centurion's servant, the gangster--the thief on the cross, the religious bigots and hypocrites, the adulterous woman, the foreign idol-worshipers, the man who was turned out of the synagogue, the covetous, the dumb, the deaf, the

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[3] Guy H. Black, Visitation Evangelism (Nashville: General Board of Evangelism, The Methodist Church, n. d.), pamphlet.

[4] Sidney W. Powell, Where Are The People? (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1942), p. 5.

> doubting and demon-possessed. All of these and many others were of the classes with whom Jesus dealt in personal visitation.[5]

The technique used by Jesus in personal visitation was based on patience, sympathy and courtesy. He found a point of contact and met the person on his own ground. He met excuses with a tactful question. He skillfully maneuvered the conversation away from arguments. He used the individual's knowledge of the Scriptures. He always answered the sinner, whether He answered the question asked or not. No case was too difficult for Him. He hated all sin, but He loved the sinner.[6]

Christ commanded that His followers search people out to lead them to Himself. In the parable of the great supper the lord instructed, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in . . ."[7] The great commission[8] given by Christ previous to His ascension includes the taking of the gospel to every creature, not just to those who faithfully assemble in the Lord's house. Conant in his book, Every-Member Evangelism, has given us the breadth of the meaning of this verse:

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[5] Hensley, op. cit., p. 125.

[6] Ibid., p. 126.

[7] Luke 14:23.

[8] Mark 16:15.

> It is popularly supposed that "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" is an appeal to enter the ministry, and especially to go as a missionary. The vast majority of Christians have never dreamed that it is a personal, individual, command to every child of God to go into his own personal world and do soul-winning witnessing to every creature.[9]

Personal visitation in the book of Acts. The last promise that Christ gave to His followers before His ascension concerned the gift of the Holy Spirit which would empower them for personal witnessing.[10] The immediate consequence of the coming of the Comforter is seen in the events that came to pass on the day of Pentecost. After informal witnessing by those who were filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter rose to preach.[11] This personal witnessing was undoubtedly basic in the conversion of the three thousand souls that were added to the followers of Christ that day.

Many of the thrilling historical events recorded in Acts following the Day of Pentecost are concerned with personal visitation. The lame man at the gate Beautiful was reached for Christ by personal contact with Peter and

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[9] J. E. Conant, Every-Member Evangelism (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1922), p. ix-x.

[10] Acts 1:8.

[11] J. E. Conant, op. cit., p. 13.

John. Philip explained the things of God to the eunuch as they sat in a chariot on a desert road. Christ personally sought out Saul on the road to Damascus. As a result of the visit of Paul and Silas in the home of the Philippian jailor, his family was converted.

In his last words of council to the Ephesian elders, Paul reminded them of his example as he taught from house to house.[12] He commanded them to take this same careful care of the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers.

II. PASTORAL VISITATION THROUGH THE HISTORY OF THE ORGANIZED CHURCH

The early church. Following the immediate days of the apostles, the church could have grown in no other way than by personal evangelism, for public meetings were forbidden.[13]

In the writings of Clement of Alexandria and Cyprian there is proof that in their time the officers of the church visited the members in their homes. Such examples indicate that the early fathers did not deem the instruction given

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[12] Acts 20:20.

[13] John Timothy Stone, Winning Men (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1946), p. 20.

in public worship sufficient to meet the demands of the spiritual life. Preaching was supplemented by a personal contact made in the home. Unfortunately, home visitation in many instances did not retain the benefits of a pastor's personal interest in each member of his flock, but emphasis soon fell on the inspection of adherance to the discipline of the church.[14]

De Jong has summarized the attitudes toward family visitation of such outstanding early church fathers as Chrysostem, Gregory the Great, and Augustine:

> Chrysostem, the most distinguished orator of Constantinople, insisted that in spite of the many difficulties which this task worked, it was essential to the welfare of the churches. Many, he realized, desired such visits by the officers of the church only because they flattered personal pride. Yet in spite of the danger of ministering to and feeding such sinful desires, he felt that all members should be contacted in their homes. Gregory the Great also understood the value of having the pastors know the conditions and needs of all the members of the flock. In his writings Ambrose of Milan placed a high value on the work, claiming that by giving such guidance to individual souls the priest is fulfilling the work which he began at the administration of the sacraments in public worship. One of the chief regrets of Augustine, the best-known of all these early church fathers, was that he had not given more consideration to pastoral duties, particularly those of shepherding the souls entrusted to his care.[15]

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[14] Peter Y. De Jong, Taking Heed to the Flock (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1948), p. 19-20.

[15] Ibid., p. 20.

The Roman Catholic influence. Soon after Augustine the church began to shift its emphasis in the spiritual care of its members. A new theory of the church and sacraments had come to be accepted. By the faithful external use of sacraments, grace was wrought in the soul in a mechanical way. This gave a new significance to the visible church which did great damage to the work of visitation. The concern of the priests was to add to the glory and power of the church, rather than to stimulate the spiritual development of members.[16]

The practice of private confession began in the monasteries in Ireland and gradually forced its way into the churches everywhere. For the guidance of the priests in the exercise of this ministry, Penitential books were prepared, classifying sins and attaching suitable penances to them. In 1215 the Fourth Council of the Lateran was able without any serious opposition to establish the private confessional as a part of canon law.[17] The domination of the priests over the lives of the people then became an established fact.

The Reformation of Luther. Luther's stand on the doc-

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[16] Ibid., p. 20-1.

[17] Oscar Hardman, A History of Christian Worship (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1937), pp. 56, 92, 124.

laration that justification was by faith alone made a break in the bondage of the Roman system. Luther purged the church of all its practices that violated this principle which he found expounded by Paul in his letter to the Romans. However, many traditions, which were not vicious, were retained. Since a mild form of the private confessional could be placed in this category, the Lutheran Church retained this practice until the period of the Thirty Years's War (1614-1648), when it fell into disuse. Many Lutheran pastors visited in the homes of their members as a means of spiritual edification, but the practice was never officially introduced by the church.[18]

The development under Calvin. The work begun by Luther continued to develop under Calvin and his followers. There was a complete break with the system of the confessional, and there was a return to the practice of visiting members in their homes as a means of spiritual stimulation:

> Already at an early date Calvin emphasized that pastoral work included far more than official preaching of the gospel. He insisted on faithfulness on the part of all the pastors in visiting the members of the church, since he realized how beneficial this work was for the development of the spiritual life and the edification of the church. Those Reformed leaders who came to Geneva during that time and saw the progress which had been made began to follow the same pattern of church care. Thus the practice of family visitation

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[18] De Jong., op. cit., p. 22-3.

> became current wherever Reformed churches were established . . . . And only by restoring and maintaining the proper spiritual contact between the church's officers and her members were they able to rejoice in an evident revival of spiritual life in the congregation.[19]

The Reformed fathers and visitation procedure. The main concern of the majority of the reformed fathers in family visitation seemed to bear heavily on religious practices that were or were not observed. Zepperus visited the family to discover what knowledge each member had of the faith, whether family worship and catechetical teaching in the home was maintained and whether the family faithfully attended the preaching of the Word and the Lord's supper. William Teelinck, a reformed pastor at Middelburg during the first quarter of the seventeenth century, considered visitation profitable at the time of the observance of the Lord's supper.[20]

Voetius recognized that there were two types of visitation prevalent in his church, which he classified as regular visitation and occasional visitation. There was the regular visitation of the minister and elders previous to the observance of the Lord's supper to assure that the believers understood and practiced proper preparation. An inquiry

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[19] Ibid., p. 22-4.

[20] Ibid., p. 74.

was made into such matters as faithful church attendance, the practice of godliness in the home, and harmonious relationships with neighbors. The purpose of an occasional visit, according to Voetius, was to seek confidential information about the spiritual condition of each member of the family. The weak in faith were thus encouraged and the wayward were warned.[21]

Richard Baxter and visitation. Richard Baxter was a noteworthy pastor, who lived in Kiddermaster, in seventeenth century England. His ministry still presents a challenge to those who are going forth to preach. This is evidenced by a recent publication (1948) on his life and work, entitled A Pastoral Triumph.

Baxter stressed the importance of pastors knowing and serving every individual in their charge. No one should be slighted or overlooked. For a pastor to be a successful spiritual physician, he must be acquainted with the whole of a person's state--inclination, conversations, weaknesses, and areas of spiritual neglect.[22] Such a complete acquaintance with an individual necessitated association with him in his home. That home visitation was a practice

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[21] Ibid., p. 74-5.

[22] Charles F. Kemp, A Pastoral Triumph (New York: Macmillan Company, 1948), p. 45-6.

of Baxter's is suggested by a comment made by a biographer:

> The secret of Baxter's success, perhaps, consisted prominently in the zeal, affection and perservance he displayed in following his people to their homes. His visits from house to house were for the purpose of applying with more close and pungent force the truths which were taught from the pulpit or learned in the systematic instructions which were given to families and children.[23]

Pastoral visitation in the nineteenth century. Daniel P. Kidder, writing on the Christian pastorate in 1871, indicated that visitation was still considered an important feature in the ministry. Says Kidder, in speaking of this function of a pastor:

> " . . . no pastor should be content without securing, from time to time, opportunities for thorough religious conversation with the various members of his church and congregation, whether parents, children, or servants, young or old, rich or poor. Such conversation is usually most profitable when individuals can be isolated, rather than spoken to in each other's presence. A proper pastoral visit should be closed with prayer suited to the conditions of the several members of the family, and any other persons present. . . . So important a work deserves to be well and conscientiously done . . . "[24]

Pastoral visitation in the twentieth century. Following the typical trend of this age, it might be expected that pastoral visitation would be considered an outmoded

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23 Ibid., p. 35, citing Life of Baxter, American Tract Society.

24 Daniel P. Kidder, The Christian Pastorate (Cincinati: Hitchcock and Walden, 1871), p. 471-2.

tradition. However, Charles Erdman in The Work of the Pastor, published in 1928, made the statement that the day of pastoral visitation had not passed. While it was true that some ministers regarded this form of service as a vanishing tradition and some found it a disagreeable task, yet others regarded it as it should be--a priceless privilege. Making all allowances for the changed conditions of modern life, Erdman stated that pastoral visitation was as truly a part of the pastor's work as it ever had been, and that a large percentage of the failures in the modern ministry were attributable to its neglect.[25]

In The Work of the Pastor are found suggestions to make pastoral visitation a profitable service. The first requirement given was that each visit be made with a definite purpose in mind. Such purposes may include bringing comfort to the sick and sorrowing, securing recruits for various phases of church work, inquiring for absentees, greeting new arrivals in the community, or cultivating a closer friendship with members of the congregation. A second suggestion that was given stressed the importance of meaningful conversation, not idle chatter. The pastor should not ramble on aimlessly about himself, but rather he

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[25] Charles R. Erdman, The Work of the Pastor (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1928), p. 53-4.

should strive to learn the spiritual condition of his parishioners, to win their confidence and affection, to supplement his pulpit instruction, or to foster in his members a desire to be faithful in church attendance.[26]

In 1937 pastoral visitation was still considered a vital part of the ministry. Palmer, in The Minister's Job, gave two advantages of visitation that worked together for the Protestant minister. The pastor, as contrasted with the Catholic priest, was traditionally expected to make calls throughout his parish. The pastor likewise had an advantage over the physician since he was not paid for services to the soul, nor did he have to wait for a call before rendering spiritual first aid. Pastoral calling gave the minister an opportunity to learn inside facts about the lives of his parishioners which enabled him to be a wise counselor. When difficulties arose, the pastor could tactfully offer his services.[27]

Peter H. Pleune in his book Some To Be Pastors, published in 1943, recognized the fact that pastoral visiting often seemed to be just one of those things which pastors had always done, and for all the results that were evident,

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[26] Ibid., pp. 54, 56.

[27] Albert W. Palmer, The Minister's Job (Chicago Willett, Clark and Company, 1937), p. 27.

it might be just as profitable to discontinue the practice. "Yet," Pleune continues, "every minister could testify to the unmistakable fact that when he neglects this part of his work everything about his ministry suffers."[28] Home visitation is a vital contact made by the pastor for in it not just individuals are considered, but the basis of the strength of Christianity--the family. Peter H. Pleune further suggested that the purpose of a call is defeated if it is so brief as to seem casual or hurried. Also, many a call is known to have saved a situation in a church where feelings had been hurt or unduly stirred by some incident among members. The pastoral visit had the effect of a soothing ointment.[29] The abiding value of pastoral visitation is well stated in Some To Be Pastors:

> The old-fashioned doorbell may be gone, but the wisdom and the necessity of the minister standing before the door of his people's homes seeking to come in for the purpose of an intimate and personalized ministry has not changed at all.[30]

In a recent lecture on "Needs and Relationships of Pastoral Work to Pulpit Work," it was noted that there is an even greater need for pastoral visitation today than ever

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[28] Peter H. Pleune, Some To Be Pastors (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1943), p. 49-50.

[29] Ibid., pp. 50-5.

[30] Ibid., p. 49.

before in the history of the church. The basis for this need lies in the number of broken homes and in the impersonal relationships which abound in society. Many individuals who live in comparative social isolation long for some one to take a personal interest in them and in their souls. It was also suggested in this lecture that pastoral visitation would supply the preacher with pulpit material having the ring of reality because of its closeness to life. A sermon may contain beautiful sentiments, but no hearts will be gripped, nothing will be perpetuated unless the minister has a practical, personal knowledge of the needs of his people. Since a pastor's work is one of persuasion and winsomeness, pastoral visitation helps to extend the reach of the Sunday message. A message will be much more effective if it is accepted by a parishioner whose confidence and friendship have already been won by a pastoral visit.[31]

III. A RECENT DEVELOPMENT--VISITATION EVANGELISM

Definition and need. Visitation evangelism is a technique in which emphasis is laid on the local church en-

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[31] W. C. Mavis, "Needs and Relationships of Pastoral Work to Pulpit Work" (unpublished lecture in Pastoral Psychology, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky, March 1, 1950 - March 2, 1950).

deavor in soul winning. It is evangelism centered in, and growing out of, the local church, in which each member assumes evangelistic responsibility.[32] It is an organized program sponsored by a church or group of churches in which laymen, after an instruction period, go out two by two into homes to interview definite prospects with the specific purpose of leading them to commit their lives to Christ.

Visitation evangelism is not optional for a church of today. It is essential. If a church wishes to be alive and to grow, to develop the members it already has, it must visit for Christ.[33] There must be churches and preaching, but it is futile to put entire dependence on this means, for most sermons today are preached to those who are already convinced. As stated by one author, "Evangelism cannot be too pulpit centered, for the man who needs to be evangelized is not there to preach to."[34] Since this is a day when non-church people do not go to church, the church must go to the people.

Visitation evangelism seeks out those who are lost to the church because they have moved to a new place, particu-

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32 Arthur C. Archibald, New Testament Evangelism (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1946), pp. 8-9.

33 n. n., "Visitation Evangelism? Yes!" Shepherds, 4:13, March, 1950.

34 Archibald, op. cit., p. 46.

larly to new cities. Here they feel strange because they know no one. Accustomed to a small church in their home town, one of the few there, they are bewildered when confronted with the choice among hundreds of city churches. The church that first ministers to them by sending a visitor usually wins their loyalty.[35] Surveys that have been made reveal the vast number of unchurched in the large cities:

> In St. Paul, a city of nearly 300,000 population, there are 75,000 Protestants, 80,000 Roman Catholics, and 112,000 unaffiliated. There are in Pittsburgh 242,631 unchurched; in Cleveland, 378,013 . . .[36]

> The unchurched population in Chicago exceeds the total population of Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, and Nevada.[37]

God's greatest resource in carrying the invitation, the human personality, is utilized in visitation evangelism. People are more susceptible to a direct, personal appeal delivered by a neighbor or by a lay person. Christian experience is thus brought down to the practicality of everyday living, and it is not seen as simply an exhortation which is the duty of a pastor.

According to Weldon F. Crossland, "The evangel of Jesus Christ offers the only hope of humanity today. It is

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[35] Powell, Where Are The People?, p. 119.

[36] Ibid., p. 114.

[37] Ibid., p. 115.

the antidote to spiritual disease and death, the medicine of abundant life. Evangelism is the chief need of the world."[38]

Method. Careful and complete organization has been found to be essential for a successful visitation evangelism program. A prospect list must be compiled; visitors need to be enlisted and trained; prayer groups should be functioning; publicity to create interest in the church needs to be planned; a means of assimilating new Christians into active church life has to be devised; a modified program for winning youth should be included; and a continuation program to complete the calling, rebuild the list or to form the basis for special campaigns in the future should be left in the hands of a permanent group.

The basis of the prospect list is the community survey. Religious census cards are filled out for each home contacted, indicating the names of each member of the household, their age, their membership or attendance in church and in Sunday school, or their church preference if they are not a regular attendant. The church then transfers available prospects to prospect and assignment cards. These cards indicate the name and address of the individual,

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38 Weldon F. Crossland, "How to Increase Church Membership and Attendance," cited by n. n., "The Methodist Evangelistic Advance, Metropolitan Philadelphia, 1949-50," (n. p., n. d.), pamphlet.

the reason for being on the prospect list, the visitors making the call, the date of the call, and the report and follow-up suggestions.[39] Other community sources aside from the survey that will furnish the church with the names and addresses of prospects are luncheon clubs, fraternal organizations, newspapers and lists of new residents as compiled by chambers of commerce, trucking or utility companies.[40]

Many prospects can be found from information gathered within the church. A church school survey will locate many parents and siblings of church school members. A check on the church membership roll will usually indicate that there are many families of which the church has contacted but one member. The use of church attendance roll call cards for several Sundays or guest cards placed in the pews will furnish the names and addresses of those who are occasional or new attendants. A careful check of all the membership rolls of the church organizations will locate many who do not attend the main services of the church. Many pastors keep a notebook of contacts made on social occasions or at weddings, funerals and in hospital visitation. Each church

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[39] Dawson C. Bryan, A Workable Plan of Evangelism (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1945), p. 39.

[40] n. n., The Methodist Evangelistic Advance, Metropolitan Philadelphia, 1949-50, pamphlet.

member can usually supply the names and addresses of many that he would desire to see won for Christ.[41]

The enlistment of visitors should not be carried on by the volunteer method. Some Christians who are exceedingly zealous are not equally endowed with the tact, common sense and pleasing personality that are the essential prerequisites for a successful church visitor. The pastor or a designated committee head should secure each visitor personally. A visitation agreement card is often used as a pledge to regular attendance at each instruction period.[42]

It has been shown that a profitable plan for instruction and visiting is one which includes a visitor's supper, a period of concise instruction and discussion, followed by the visiting itself, conducted by teams of two with prospect cards at hand.[43]

One of the topics that should be included in the visitation instruction period is the technique of effective visiting. Dawson C. Bryan has suggested nine points of efficient visiting in his book, A Workable Plan of Evangel-

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41 n. n., The Methodist Evangelistic Advance, Metropolitan Philadelphia, 1949-50, pamphlet.

42 Bryan, A Workable Plan of Evangelism, p. 42-50.

43 A. Earl Kernaham, Visitation Evangelism (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1925), p. 52-3.

ism.[44] The General Board of Evangelism of the Methodist Church has published a card, "Follow the Nine Steps of Effective Visiting and Be Successful in Winning People," which presents these nine points of Bryan in a succinct manner:

1. Secure a favorable environment

Have a prayer in your heart. Be friendly. Take a real interest in the family. Be seated close to your principal prospect. Eliminate distractions and radio.

2. Have only one conversation at a time

Decide whether you or your partner leads the interview--one should lead, and the other talk only when advisable.

3. Ask questions

To get prospects background--to get him to talk . . . Ask about his previous religious experience, attendance at Sunday school, church membership, length of time in the community, etc.

4. Avoid a "No"

Use a positive approach. Get favorable responses from your prospect. Do not start with leading questions which may be answered with a "no," and thus block the way.

5. Do not argue

Avoid argument. Always try to answer sincere questions, but do not put your opinion against the prospect's.

6. Secure decision of the first one ready.

Don't try the hardest person first. Discover who is most nearly ready for an acceptance--lead that one to a commitment--then lead the others.

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44 Bryan, A Workable Plan of Evangelism, p. 117-130.

7. Don't close too soon

Give your prospect time to consider the matter and to make his own commitment--don't rush him. Allow time for God to work . . .

8. Close as soon as you can

Whenever a person is ready to commit his life to Christ and unite with the church conclude the interview immediately by securing the commitment.

9. Do your best and don't get discouraged

If results aren't immediate, don't be discouraged. Every home you visit is better because you came. You are Christ's representative. He will bless. Rejoice in what has been accomplished and keep faithfully at work.[45]

Although Bryan gives many fine suggestions for effective visiting, emphasis needs to be placed on genuine repentance and on a crisis experience of salvation rather than on a mere commitment to follow Christ and join a church.

Black has suggested a number of appeals that can be used as effective talking points in an interview. There is the appeal to the conscience. Most people, particularly those with a background of religious training, realize their need of accepting Christ. A personal interest and a friendly invitation will usually persuade them to do what they confess they should do. Many parents will respond to the appeal for the influence of a Christian home for their chil-

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[45] n. n., Follow the Nine Steps of Effective Visiting and Be Successful in Winning People (Nashville: Tidings, n. d.), pamphlet.

dren. They can be reminded that children follow the example of their parents and that they can only be sent to church school up to a certain age. There is the appeal to Christian friendship. The knowledge of the decision of a friend or member of the family is an encouragement to make a similar decision. The personal interest appeal is very effective. There are certain people in the community who will respond to the personal visit of a neighbor. The service appeal is very challenging to youth, to young married couples and to some business men. They are interested in strengthening the forces for good in their community, and in contributing that which is most worth-while to the world. An appeal to world conditions will help individuals to realize that it is not artillery, but a moral and spiritual regeneration of individuals which will make the world safe for democracy.[46]

A further topic that should be considered in a visitation evangelism instruction period is the technique of handling difficult situations. There are three general types of situations that may be encountered. The prospect may face a serious difficulty or obstacle. If this is the case, he needs help to understand the situation and to realize that the resources of God are not limited. The prospect may offer

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[46] Guy H. Black, Visitation Evangelism, pamphlet.

excuses or give alibis. The visitor needs to discover if these excuses cover a failure or indicate unwillingness to become a Christian. The visitor must make the prospect see that God excuses no one and that each person is directly responsible for the refusal of His grace. The prospect may have a closed mind. If this is the case, the visitor will try to get him to talk in the event that some statement may give an opening.[47]

There are specific problems or excuses that frequently recur in visitation evangelism. These should be discussed in order that the visitor may be prepared to meet them. There is the moral man who considers himself a decent, respectable citizen. He needs to be shown that no one can measure up to God's standard of holiness. There is the person who feels he can not adequately understand all points of theology. The visitor must admit that there are certain things the finite mind cannot completely understand, but that the Holy Spirit will give all needed understanding to those who seek with a heart of faith. There is the person who believes that he is not good enough or that he has some uncontrollable habits. He needs to be shown that the only requisite is a heart of repentance and belief in the power

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[47] Dawson C. Bryan, "How Can I Handle Unusual Situations?" (Nashville: Tidings, n. d.), pamphlet.

of Christ. There is the problem of a divided church preference or interest between the parents. The gospel of Christ as the only means of salvation needs to be emphasized here. A most frequent excuse is that of "hypocrites" in the church. The visitor should emphasize that Christ is our example, not men. For those who have dropped away from church attendance because of hurt feelings, a good airing of the difficulty to a representative of the church, who listens sympathetically, will usually assist in mending the breach in relationships. Those parents, who believe that their only responsibility lies in sending their children to church, need to be reminded that parental example is the child's greatest inspiration.[48]

The best method of winning young people is through the influence of other young people. A good first approach is through a social event. Sidney Powell suggested three nights of visitation: a visitation just to make friends; a visitation for cultivation and to invite new friends to a fellowship social; and a visitation to seek definite decisions for Christ.[49]

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[48] Bryan, A Workable Plan of Evangelism, p. 132-143.

[49] Sidney W. Powell, Toward The Great Awakening (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949), p. 129.

Specific programs and results. Sidney W. Powell in Where Are The People? cited a result of a survey and visitation campaign:

> Another discouraged congregation in a town of 500 population had reported steady decreases in membership. In the three years following the taking of a religious census, however, there was an increase from 98 members to 399.[50]

Dawson C. Bryan in A Workable Plan of Evangelism gave the instance of a pastorate which had less than 300 members. The church held one week of training conferences and visits, using young couples as visitors. These visitors continued the program by calling one evening each month. In five years the membership had increased to over 800, the church debt was paid, a new educational building was erected, and attendance had so increased that it was necessary to have two identical services each Sunday morning.[51]

In Amsterdam, New York, from October 23, 1949, to October 27, 1949, a city-wide Personal Visitation Evangelistic Campaign was held. A Methodist minister from Indiana conducted the campaign. Representatives of twelve churches sat in on the training session, although only six churches had made proper advance preparation to participate actively in the program. There was a total of 185 decisions, result-

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50 Powell, Where Are The People?, p. 117.

51 Bryan, A Workable Plan of Evangelism, p. 21.

ing in 71 persons uniting with the churches on profession of faith and 44 uniting with local churches by transfer or letter. There was a total of 62 workers who visited. Only one note of disappointment was voiced. Many inactive Protestants in the city, who had expected a visit, did not receive one. This has prompted many churches to so organize as to continue the work.[52]

At the General Conference of the Methodist Church, in 1948, a program for reaching the unchurched called "The Advance For Christ and His Church" was inaugurated. The goal of 400,000 persons to be won for Christ was set for 1949. The goal that has been set for this present year (1950) is 500,000.[53] As a means of achieving this goal, specific programs in visitation evangelism have been launched. Philadelphia was chosen as the headquarters for a dramatic experiment in this type of program. The largest simultaneous evangelistic operation ever attempted in the Methodist Church was held here from November 26, 1949, to December 2, 1949. There were 300 to 400 participating churches with 5,000 laymen to visit 30,000 prospects for Christ. A great school of evangelism was held in Arch

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52 n. n., "Successful Visitation Evangelism Across These United States," Shepherds, 4:28, March, 1950.

53 n. n., "Suggestions for Answers to Quarterly Conference Questions," Shepherds, 4:4, March, 1950.

Street Methodist Church where more than 700 Methodist leaders received training in visitation and pulpit evangelism. The evening programs were held in each of the participating churches by the guest evangelistic preacher and the guest director of visitation.[54]

In a report on this Philadelphia campaign of visitation evangelism, Ray B. McGrew made the following statements:

> At Philadelphia men went out with a purpose and they came back with thrills and inspiration of new born souls as the reward for their labors.
>
> Pastors of the local churches testified to the great impact that was being made upon their entire congregation. Those who preached and visited said that it was the greatest experience they had ever witnessed . . .
>
> In Jewish homes, in German homes, in Polish homes we found a responsive spirit to the appeal of the gospel. People in cities, country and parish are hungry for Christ and were receptive to the message and messengers of the Kingdom . . .
>
> The churches and the hearts of Methodism will stand a little wider ajar because people came together in prayer at Philadelphia and came away full of the knowledge of God's power.[55]

The week of March 12, 1950, to March 16, 1950, was National Visitation Evangelism Week for this year. This week was a high point in Methodist Churches in what was

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54 n. n., The Philadelphia Story in the Methodist Evangelistic Advance (Nashville: The General Board of Evangelism, The Methodist Church, n. d.), pamphlet.

55 Ray B. McGrew, "They Went Forth," Shepherds, 4:32, March, 1950.

termed a lenten advance in evangelism. This advance began on January 1 and reached its climax at Easter. Each church set forth to win its proportion of the goal of 500,000 which had been set by the General Conference.[56]

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[56] n. n., The Indiana Area, Lenten Advance in Evangelism," pamphlet.

CHAPTER IV

VISITATION--A VITAL FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHER

It has been stated that "as goes the home, so goes the success or failure of any program of religious education."[1] Whereas, in the opinion of the writer, this statement is too broad, yet it is indicative of the tremendous importance of the home in its influence upon the religious life of the individual. The successful church school teacher, therefore, is not one whose sole interest in the scholar is confined to a half hour's teaching on Sunday but rather who becomes thoroughly acquainted with the home of the pupil in order to understand his needs and to secure a home attitude that is favorable to the instruction given in church school.

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF HOME VISITATION

Religious education concerns the whole of life. Religious education is not concerned primarily with imparting knowledge about religion.[2] Education in religion is rather

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[1] W. Edward Raffety, Church-School Leadership (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1926), p. 27.

[2] Leonard A. Stidley, "Parents and Teachers Together for Children," Child Guidance in Christian Living, 8:8, April, 1949.

an education in values, in fundamental points of view, in the manner of looking at life, society and the universe. Religious education viewed in this manner is seen to be something that is much larger than a program of formalized religious instruction.[3] It is not something which can be made to thrive in a compartment by itself, away from the atmosphere of life as a whole. Religion, for any age level, must be pervasive of life or it is of no avail.[4]

In giving the aim of the Sunday school, Schuette states:

> Then the aim of the Sunday-school must be the imbedding of Bible truth into the heart, the mind, the soul, the conscience, of the pupil, be this pupil infant, a child, or youth, or adult; and the imbedding of this truth with the express purpose of having this truth decide the destiny of a soul's life hereafter and control its conduct here in this life.[5]

This definition does not present the Sunday school as an agency for the presentation of academic truths. In fact, the purpose of God in giving the Bible is seen not to be the propagation of truth for truth's sake, but for the sake of individual souls. Whether it is historical, doctrinal,

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[3] J. Paul Williams, The New Education and Religion (New York: Association Press, 1945), p. 14.

[4] George Albert Coe, Education in Religion and Morals (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1904), p. 275.

[5] Walter E. Schuette, The Best Possible Sunday-School (Columbus: The Book Concern, n. d.), p. 21.

moral, practical, law or gospel truth that is presented in the Scriptures, it is there related to human life.[6]

The influence of the home upon the religious attitudes of a pupil. Peabody has stated that "the family is the primer in the moral education of the race."[7] This was a known fact even before the establishment of the church. In Deuteronomy 6:7 the Hebrews were exhorted to teach their children diligently concerning the commandments of the Lord. Throughout the history of the Hebrews, parental instruction in religion has been the aim and dominating purpose of a high-minded family. Benson said that of the three fields of religious education, the home,[8] the school, and the church, the home was the greatest. Benson continues:

> This is because the home has exclusive control of the forces of heredity and furnishes the environment for the most impressionable years of life. Children are molded by the sentiments, opinions and moral standards which prevail where they live, eat and sleep. The home is the hotbed in which the tender plant is to be shielded and shaped during its most susceptible years. The church and the school can each contribute to the making of a child's life, but the important foundation must first be laid in the

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6 Ibid., pp. 21-2.

7 Francis G. Peabody, The Approach to the Social Question, p. 94, cited by Henry F. Cope, Religious Education In The Family (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1915), p. 57.

8 Supra, pp. 11-2.

home.[9]

Family life does not merely consist of the provision of food and shelter, but it fosters a unity of thought, ideals and feelings. This unity has a tendency to extend particularly to matters of religious convictions because of the personal nature of such convictions. It is a result of the fact that family life directly and constantly affects persons as persons.[10] The vast number of informal activities in which members of a family are engaged together blends their thought life and emotions.

Home relationships have great influence upon the religious life of a child. Of special significance is the relationship between the parents. If there is accord based on mutual love and understanding, the child will have a fair opportunity to acquire the four foundations of a wholesome Christian personality, namely, emotional security, the ability to pursue purposes with zest, a stable moral code of living, and a method of winning one's way by cooperation.[11]

Many home influences that affect the religious

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[9] Clarence H. Benson, The Sunday School In Action (Chicago: Moody Press, 1932), p. 282.

[10] Henry Frederick Cope, Religious Education In The Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918), p. 209-10.

[11] Lewis Joseph Sherrill, Understanding Children (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1939), p. 34-5.

attitudes of children are those that stem from parent-child relationships. All children seek for an ideal toward which to grow. Parents are spontaneously taken by their children as the first model for living. Sherrill stated, "No ideal that is painted in glowing words for a child, no exhortations or admonitions, can equal in influence the daily living of those parents."[12] Scientific evidence for this statement is found in the Character Education Inquiry by Hartshorne and May. There was found to be a high correlation between the moral concepts of children and parents, and a zero correlation between the moral concepts of children and teachers.[13]

A child's conception of God has a close relationship to the family situation. If parental affection is lacking, the child has a limited body of experience from which to interpret the Christian teaching of the love of God as a Father.[14] The two great commandments given by Christ are also somewhat meagerly understood by a child in this circumstance. A statement has been made that man is not pre-

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[12] Ibid., p. 39.

[13] Hartshorne and May, Character Education Inquiry, cited by Ernest M. Ligon, A Greater Generation (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948), p. 107.

[14] Sherrill, op. cit., p. 40.

pared to love either God or his neighbor until he has learned the alphabet of love in the home, where he masters it a few letters at a time.[15] God may be a "bogey man;" an ogre who is responsible for calamaties; a term used in profanity; or He may be a Person who is spoken of with reverence and addressed in prayer, depending upon the home atmosphere.[16]

Parents who project their unrealized ambitions make it difficult for their children to decide upon the will of God. Parents who are shiftless do not inspire the child with any passion or zest in any cause or calling.[17] These two extremes in parental personalities deter many from finding their rightful place in Christian service.

Some parents attempt to force Christianity upon their children. A rigid system of rules and restrictions are imposed without any explanations being given. New Testament love is not exhibited as a part of Christianity by these parents.

In some homes the attitude is engendered that a Christian is a prude or a weakling. Jibes and pointed jokes are directed at those who live upright lives. Any young person in the home, who has made a decision for Christ,

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[15] Harriet A. Marsh, The Point of View of Modern Education (Bloomington, Illinois: Public School Publishing Company, 1905), p. 97.

[16] Sherrill, op. cit., p. 49.

[17] Ibid., p. 41.

finds it difficult to maintain any sense of security as far as his family relationships are concerned.

The effectiveness of all church school instruction depends largely upon the attitude of the home. The majority of homes are not hostile to the church school, but regard it with an air of indifference. It is not considered seriously as is the public school.[18] The child comes to regard the Biblical teachings of the church school as quite non-essential and finds it easy to lose interest and drop out of it, if he discovers something more interesting to occupy that hour on Sunday.

In some instances the church school and home may be working directly against each other. The child may be taught to do one thing in the home, while the church school insists on directly the opposite as the proper mode of living. Conflicting loyalties are developed in the child's mind and he becomes confused. This confusion may develop into a dislike for the church school if the knowledge gained there leads him into difficulties at home.[19]

The trend of modern conditions has increased the length of time that a young person remains under parental influence. Hence, the new regime has increased the need for

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18 Benson, op. cit., p. 282-3.

19 Ibid., p. 205.

spiritual nurture upon the part of the family.[20]

The influence of the community upon the religious attitudes of a pupil. Every community[21] exerts a moral influence which creeps in upon its members in a subtle way. A neighborhood is not neutral toward religion. There is a respect or disrespect for Sunday, for God, for Christian living; whether from the leading persons of the community, the business men, the laborers, or from the "ne'er do wells."[22] The playground, club, street corner, and billboards also contribute their influence. The extent of community influence is noted when it is considered that for every hour a pupil spends in church school, he spends from five to twenty in play and amusements in his community.[23]

Hollingshead, in his study published as Elmtown's Youth, found that the youth who lived in the least desirable section of town learned to resent their family and came to believe that they were acting as their own agent,

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[20] Ross L. Finney, A Sociological Philosophy of Education (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928), p. 195.

[21] Supra, p. 17.

[22] Sherrill, op. cit., p. 47.

[23] Henry Frederick Cope, Organizing The Church School (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1923), p. 238.

insisting upon freedom.[24] Such an attitude fostered by the environment would make it difficult for an individual to be willing to submit to the will of God.

In areas where there is much economic dependence, oftimes there is a general attitude of rebellion, and the residents of the area find it difficult to see the goodness of God.

The community is the society in which one lives his religious life. It may be an ally for Christian living or it may present many hindrances.[25]

II. THE PURPOSE OF HOME VISITATION

To understand the pupil. Sherrill has stated, "You can no more understand him [the child] without knowing his home and surroundings than you can think of a plant detached from the soil which nourishes it."[26] A child is in a large measure what he is because of the people he lives with and the way in which they live together. The older members in a family tend to reproduce a part of their personality in the younger members of the family. For this reason, to

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[24] August B. Hollingshead, Elmtown's Youth (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1949), pp. 443-4.

[25] Cope, Organizing The Church School, pp. 238-9.

[26] Lewis Joseph Sherrill, Understanding Children, p. 32.

understand a child one must make the acquaintance of the other members of the family and observe the relationships that exist between them.[27]

A realistic knowledge of the home background will give the teacher insight into the individual differences that exist between the class members. She will come to know the child's likes, dislikes, desires, and difficulties. She will find out his special skills, enthusiasms, and hobbies. A personal call will give the teacher an understanding of the child's problems that she will get in no other way.[28] She will learn to feel with him and will have less tendency in her teaching to overpraise the good child and to blame the difficult child.

To vitalize teaching. As the pastor in his parish call secures material for his next Sunday's sermon,[29] so the teacher in her home visits prepares herself to make better contacts with the pupil in church school. By learning the interests and needs of the home, the teacher equips herself with a background that aids her in teaching as much, if not more, than the actual study of the lesson materials.

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27 Ibid., pp. 32-3.

28 Mildred Morningstar, Reaching Children (Chicago: Moody Press, 1944), p. 169.

29 Supra, p. 35.

This first hand information makes it possible for her to fit her teaching into the actual needs of the learners.[30] Forsyth considers home visitation vital in lesson preparation, whether the pupils are children, young people or adults, and concludes by saying, "Visiting isn't just something to do if you find time, it is a must to effective teaching."[31]

Vital teaching not only includes a lesson presentation which is applied in a practical way but includes teaching by living a life. Hence, the home visit not only provides for vital teaching in the Sunday session by means of words but also by touching the life of the child in his home. As Benson observes, "We teach a little by what we say, more by what we do, but most by what we are."[32]

To indicate the teacher's personal interest and to gain the pupil's confidence. As a rule, church school teachers manifest too little interest in the life of their pupils. When a pupil is absent, a penny postcard is sent, and the church school believes that it has fulfilled its

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30 E. L. Crump, "Little Lessons in Church School Visitation," The Church School, 3:2, October, 1949.

31 Nathaniel F. Forsyth, "Friendly Visiting By Church School Teachers," The Church School, 2:25, June, 1949.

32 Clarence H. Benson, The Sunday School In Action, p. 286.

responsibility. If an absent teacher received the same treatment, she might realize better the attitude of the pupil when no one inquired as to the reason for his absence. Greeting the absentee upon his return with, "I had hoped to see you," does not improve the situation. It leaves an impression of neglect. It is the prompt visit that makes the pupil feel that the teacher is interested in him.[33]

"A shepherd who does not miss one of his flock, or who, if the member is missed, does not seek it out, is unworthy of his calling," says Brown and then relates the following incident:

> A boy, very regular in Sunday School attendance, was absent for a few weeks. The teacher simply marked "Left" in the class book without seeking the cause of the absence. The superintendent noticed the word and, not satisfied, called at the home of that boy. He found him in the delirium of a fever, calling the name of his teacher. The superintendent wrote after the word "Left"--"by an indifferent teacher to die, from an accident, at No. __ Street."[34]

In contrast are the childhood experiences of Mabel McKee and Nathaniel Forsyth:

> Back in my childhood I enjoyed and loved my teacher, Miss Amy, who visited my home frequently. She played our piano on those visits and we children gathered around her and sang. She stayed for

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[33] Alfred L. Murray, Psychology For Christian Teachers (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1943), pp. 200-3.

[34] Frank L. Brown, Plans For Sunday School Evangelism (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1920), pp. 81-2.

> supper and always offered a simple grace. The younger children looked forward to the day when they would be old enough to be in her class.[35]

> The one church-school teacher who meant most to me when I was a boy--when my interests had not yet become settled--was one who cared enough about my brother and me to visit in our home.[36]

The Christian teacher who can minister most fully to the needs of her pupils is the one who is known in their homes. Not only does the visiting give her an understanding of their problems, but it identifies her as one who is willing to be available for help. Her interest will draw her close to the heart of the pupil. Young and old alike have need of council on problems.[37]

To enlist the cooperation and interest of the parent. The importance of home cooperation is emphasized by a statement made by Ligon, "Not only will we not promise to do anything for your child without your cooperation, we will promise not to,"[38] and by a statement made by Stidley, "The quality of relationships of parents and teachers is an as-

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[35] Mabel McKee, "Let's Work Together," Child Guidance in Christian Living, 8:15, May, 1949.

[36] Nathaniel F. Forsyth, "Friendly Visiting By Church School Teachers," The Church School, 2:25, June, 1949.

[37] Murray, op. cit., p. 212.

[38] Ernest M. Ligon, A Greater Generation (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948), p. 106.

curate barometer of the religious education of children."[39]

There are two prevalent attitudes in homes today that need to be corrected. Too many parents have considered that the church can take over the entire responsibility for the religious training of their children.[40] Other parents have the improper attitude that they are doing the church a favor to send their children to church school.[41]

Means must be sought to encourage the cooperation and maintain the interest of parents in the church school. When through friendly visitation by the church school teacher, a bond of friendship is established between the teacher and the family, and the parents understand what the church is trying to do for their children, the desired relationship between the home and church school will follow.

Cooperation is not only needed in giving religious instruction, but it is needed in solving personality and behavior problems. Since these problems have their root in the home environment, their discovery, when made, requires a partnership project between parents and teacher. Like-

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39 Leonard A. Stidley, "Parents and Teachers Together for Children," Child Guidance in Christian Living, 8:8, April, 1949.

40 Eva B. McCallum, Learning in the Nursery Class (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1944), p. 28.

41 Paul H. Vieth, The Church In Its Teaching Work (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1937), p. 54.

wise, the procedure for treatment must be consistently carried out in the home as well as the school if favorable results are to be obtained.[42]

Fergusson has made a scale of home cooperation which covers nine points: attendance(child sent), disciplinary (authority of teacher supported), facilitating (place for home-study in schedule), sympathetic (discourage adverse claims of other interests on child's time), financial (opportunity afforded to earn--a real offering), pedagogic (assistance in home lesson study), devotional (family worship, grace), evangelistic (if parents are Christian), vocational (encourage child to obey God's will for his life).[43]

To improve the home environment. The changes in society[44] which have resulted in congested cities and a complex network of organizations have made it difficult for some homes to religiously make good as did the simpler homes in the earlier days of this country.[45] With the

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42 Mary Sue White, "Caring For Individual Differences," Child Guidance in Christian Living, 9:17, April, 1950.

43 E. Morris Fergusson, Church-School Administration (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1922), pp. 127-8.

44 Supra, pp. 5-6.

45 W. Edward Raffety, Church-School Leadership (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1926), pp. 28-9.

relaxation of all forms of family worship, the influence of the home has decreased in the sphere of religion.

The most important aspect of visiting is witnessing to the parents of the salvation provided in Christ. To quote Benson:

> The best example any boy or girl can have is that of God-fearing, Christ-loving, church-serving parents. If through the years of intimate association the child comes to respect highly his parents' Christianity, he will form strong habits of reverence and respect for God which nothing can shake. Many an individual has been won to Christ by what he has seen in the religious life of his father and mother. Nothing can equal the example of a devoted Christian life.[46]

If the home cannot be Christian, then the teacher can seek to foster an atmosphere that will not be anti-religious, using the church-school period to explain the true meaning of Christianity.[47]

Many parents, who are Christians, need instruction and guidance in providing a home atmosphere that will lead their children to Christ and fit them to live a life in harmony with the complete will of God. Some parents are unaware of many teaching situations which directly influence the lives of their children.

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[46] Clarence H. Benson, The Sunday School In Action (Chicago: Moody Press, 1932), pp. 283-4.

[47] E. L. Crump, "Little Lessons in Church School Visitation," The Church School, 3:2, October, 1949.

To promote regular attendance. The term of membership in the church school is very short. More people have been lost from church school than are now members. The gravity of this problem is realized when it is seen that almost all those who are kept in fundamental church schools from childhood to maturity accept Christ in salvation, and from such are gathered nearly all of the efficient church workers.[48]

An annual round-up of old members is hardly effective. There needs to be immediate and individual attention given to those who are absent.[49]

According to Alfred L. Murray, there is a psychological basis for a visit to the absentee:

> All of us, children and adults alike, learn by pleasant and unpleasant associations. We tend to repeat those acts which have produced pleasing results. . . .
>
> A Sunday arrives when the pupil, for various reasons, is unable to attend his class. The blessings that he has received on previous Sundays are denied him. He will, therefore, wish to return as soon as possible. But should his remaining at home bring him in contact with a new and more pleasing environment, equally as interesting to him as the Church school, it is difficult to determine what his future action might be. He may now stay home,

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[48] E. L. Middleton, Building A Country Sunday School (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1923), p. 34.

[49] Jesse L. Cuninggim and Eric M. North, The Organization and Administration of the Sunday School (Cincinnati: The Methodist Book Concern, 1914), p. 136.

> or he may return and continue to be a regular attendant of the class. Whenever such occasions arise, the teacher should be present to make stronger the former ties, and thus add to the previous pleasant associations.[50]

To bring the unreached into the church school. Teachers in visiting their pupils can encourage all the members of the family to attend church school. Teachers of the classes in which each non-attending member of the family would belong, if enrolled in the church school, should be encouraged to visit the home, also.

The foremost means of discovering the unreached is the census in the taking of which trained visitors are used to enlist new class members.[51]

To care for the neglected who can not attend. The extension department has a vital service in visiting those who are unable to attend because of occupation, physical infirmity, or age. They are neglected and lonely individuals who would appreciate being enrolled as continuing members. Concerning the aged, Crossland says, "Continued fellowship is the old-age pension of Christian service to

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[50] Alfred L. Murray, Psychology For Christian Teachers, pp. 203-4.

[51] Supra, pp. 38-45.

which they are rightfully entitled."[52]

III. THE PROCEDURE OF HOME VISITATION

How to find and win new members. Prospects for the church school should be located and visited by the method used in visitation evangelism, described in the preceding chapter.[53] Visiting should be systematic as a gradual, steady growth is to be preferred over a large increase by means of a spasmodic effort.[54] Sources for prospects can also include children attending weekday or vacation church school and babies whose names can be placed on the cradle roll.

How to enlist the help of the home by the use of literature. Interpret the lessons being used at the church school and leave with the parents booklets and lesson materials that will enable them to assist the child. Teacher-parent magazines, which are more effective than the teacher's quarterly, are available now.[55]

Prayers and family worship can be encouraged by the

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52 Weldon Crossland, How To Build Up Your Church School (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1948), p. 125.

53 Supra, pp. 38-45.

54 Cuninggim and North, op. cit., p. 136.

55 Raymond V. Kearns, Jr., "The Family and the Church School," Religious Education, 44:156-7, May-June, 1949.

visiting teacher who supplies the home with aids and helps for family devotion. Denominational headquarters can provide the teacher with books or pamphlets containing daily devotional material and prayers for meals and the close of day.[56]

Forsyth suggests that each visit be planned so that one particular concern will be stressed. After the conversation the teacher can leave a pamphlet dealing with the idea discussed. Aside from devotional and lesson material, visits should include instruction and the distribution of material on Christian living at home, tithing, what parents and teachers have a right to expect of each other, ways in which parents unthinkingly teach, family fun, and sex education.[57]

How visitation is carried on in one city church. If at all possible, the teacher should not be a total stranger in the homes from which her pupils are recruited. Instances do occur in which the teacher could not be asked to make as many visits to the home as should be made, or at the time when they were necessary. To care for such a

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56 Murray, op. cit., pp. 213-4.

57 Nathaniel F. Forsyth, The Friendly Methodist Church School Teacher, (Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, n. d.), pamphlet.

situation, the Baptist Temple of Rochester, New York, organized a Parent-Teacher Council, the chief function of which is to supply a group of mothers to do regular visiting in the homes of the church school children. Two mothers are chosen from each department, and a chairman and assistant organize the work. The mothers call on new members, absentees, and on the sick. They explain the program of the church school, look for leaders, and take advantage of opportunities to give help and encouragement. The teacher, if possible, accompanies the visiting mother.[58]

This program bears a similarity to that of the professional visiting teacher program in secular education.[59] It possesses the same disadvantages in that there is infinitely more value in the teacher of the pupil visiting personally rather than by proxy. Visitors can make detailed reports to the teacher, but reports can in no wise give the same teaching advantage as first-hand observation.

How to visit as illustrated by a case study.

> There was a boy in the first year primary department of a Church school, who persisted in swearing at the other children. The teacher ignored him until one day she asked him: "Where did you learn

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[58] Mildred M. Lampson, "Parents Help The Church School," International Journal of Religious Education, 24:10, January, 1948.

[59] Supra, p. 12.

to say those words, Tommy?" "At home," was the child's proud reply. "My Daddy thinks I say big words." From further conversation with the pupil she concluded that his father was actually teaching him to swear. Evidently the father thought it was smart to hear the child use profanity.

The teacher realized that she was dealing with a child of un-Christian parents. The father was not only teaching the boy to use profanity, but was encouraging him in it by laughing at his efforts. She asked the child when his parents were both at home, and at her first opportunity she visited the pupil.

When the teacher called, she found the parents and child enjoying the evening meal. She indicated that she was not in a hurry, for she had come to see Tommy. The father and mother insisted on her having supper with them. She finally decided that she would sit beside Tommy and drink a cup of coffee.

The teacher took occasion to praise their child. She referred to Tommy's work and by this method explained the work of her department. Both parents manifested deep interest. She explained how she tried to relate her work to the child's home, and added: "I shall always be glad to cooperate with you. I appreciate your cooperation in sending your son to my school."

The father replied that he was brought up in a church of another faith, and that later he wanted his boy to join that church. While he did not go to church himself, he wanted his son to belong.

The teacher listened patiently, and explained that she was interested in the child and would do her best to help develop him into a fine Christian; so that when the time came for him to unite with his father's church, he should have first made Christ the center of his life. "I will help you," said the mother. "Is there anything that we can do more than we are now doing?" she asked. The teacher answered: "I appreciate your Christian spirit, and I shall remember to let you know."

Tommy left the room to answer the call of a playmate. This was the opportunity for which the teacher had

been waiting. She said: "You asked me if you could help me now with my work. I did not want to mention it before Tommy. It is a little matter, and I would not mention it, except for your kindness and you manifestation of interest in my work. It might develop into a more serious habit later." The father interrupted: "What is it?"

"In my department the children are in close friendship and one learns from the other," the teacher answered. "I don't imagine he does it at home, but he swears at the other children, when they annoy him. I am ignoring him, hoping he will soon forget all about it. Should you hear him swear, just ignore him," she continued. "There is no harm in swearing," said the father. "Maybe not," said the teacher, "but we have been studying about the Commandments and these children are very bright, like Tommy, and what they learn they want to put into practice."

The return of the child to the room was timely. The teacher put her arm around him, and said, "I am glad you came back, Tommy, for I must go. Let us both say that prayer we learned." "About thanking God for our home?" inquired the child. The teacher nodded. Two heads reverently bowed, and then two other heads bent low. The child and his teacher approached God in the same simple prayer. Soon the teacher said farewell; the hand of a child was seen waving after her, and a father and mother thanked her for calling.

Did the call produce results? It did. Tommy's swearing soon lessened and then ceased, and he proved himself to be worthy of the teacher's confidence and time. The teacher had made a difficult but profitable visit.

Observe her approach. First she ascertained from the child when her call would give her the opportunity to meet the parties she wanted to see. She did not announce her coming, but visited the home at a time when both parents were likely to be there. She developed a friendly atmosphere by sitting at the table and eating something with the family.

Her topic was one of common interest; the child. She began by expressing her interest in the boy, who also was the object of the parents' affection. Though the child was seriously disturbing the composure of

her group she refrained from mentioning it, but praised him instead. Unless the opportunity should present itself, she would say nothing about the difficulty she faced. Her interest was in the child's welfare.

The father raised a debatable question. He spoke of another church being superior to the one she loved. Like the woman at the well, he introduced the question as to where we ought to worship God. The teacher refused to be drawn into an argument. She passed over it into the more important consideration: the child's relationship to Christ.

She did not present her problem in the presence of the child, nor did she lodge a complaint. She had successfully led the parents to the place where they volunteered help, and asked how they could assist her. She acknowledged that they could help her.

When the father made light of her perplexity, she showed no offense, but pictured the inconsistency involved. She did not mention the child's undesirable behavior, rather she commended the child for leadership and for influencing others in their thinking. She had one purpose, and that was to better prepare the child for Christian living. Other things were given minor importance and emphasis.

This teacher had fulfilled all the requirements for a successful call. She created a friendly atmosphere, by indulging in a conversation that was of vital concern to the parents. She led the child's parents through kindness, praise and favorable comments to the place where they manifested a desire to help. They were asked to help her in her work. She was definite in stating what could be done, but left it with the parents to decide if they wanted to follow her suggestions. Her conversation was free from criticism, dogmatism, argumentation, and unkindness. She demonstrated consideration for the feelings of the child and the parents. Her interest was a common one with the parents. Her cause was not presented until she was requested to reveal it.[60]

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[60] Alfred L. Murray, Psychology For Christian Teachers, pp. 205-210.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Throughout the history of mankind, God has used the impact of human personality, devoted to His service, to further His cause. The universal command of Christ to His followers was that they should be witnesses. Christ's gospel was to be proclaimed by all believers regardless of their station in life or their occupation.

It has been pointed out that churches today have suddenly realized the one-to-one correspondence between the great commission given by Christ and lay evangelism. Organized home visitation programs have been held with a resulting expansion of the outreach of the church. It has been personal contact that has reached the hearts of people.

A review of pastoral visitation through the centuries has presented evidence that a pastor's contacts in the homes of his parishioners is the underlying factor in a successful ministry. A visit enables a pastor to share the problems of his people.

This study has set forth the prominence of the home in any program of religious education. The home is the first teacher of religion. It is the home that controls an individual during the most formative period of his life. It has been shown that the home is the vital contact point

for the church school teacher is she is (1) to understand her pupils, (2) to teach with a practicality that will reach and assist her pupils in their spiritual problems, (3) to inspire her pupils with an example of Christlike living, (4) to win the confidence of her pupils, (5) to witness to unreached parents, (6) to promote regular attendance.

The teacher's duty is two-fold: to gain an understanding of the needs of her pupils, and to point them to the sufficiency of Christ in meeting those needs.

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